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HERMIONE

& OTHER

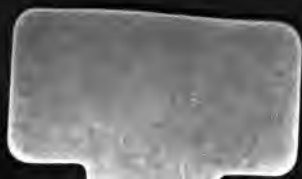
POEMS



BY THOMAS BRADFIELD



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**HERMIONE, AND OTHER POEMS.**





# HERMIONE,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

*THOMAS BRADFIELD.*



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## HERMIONE.



It was a grove in fair and sunny Greece :  
A grove with flowers of every charming kind,  
A grove where Love the shady boughs did haunt,  
Filling the cool air with her soft sweet breath.  
'Twas moonlight when our tale begins ; a veil  
Of purest light shone over the still trees.  
There, by the cowslips, slept a dozen elves,  
And 'neath a grand old oak two Satyrs talked :  
“ To-day I saw a maiden by the fount,”  
Said one, a tall weird-looking animal,  
With dark brown hairy skin, and a large face,  
Grotesque as those that horrid nightmare breeds.

“ I saw a maiden by the fount to-day,  
Bathing her soft limbs in its cooling waves—  
Limbs that were fair and rosy as the morn.  
I loved her, and was trying to draw near  
Beneath the shady trees, to seize her form,  
When on some hazel-nuts I chanced to tread  
Which made a cracking ; this she heard at once,  
And over the bright flowers she fled away,  
Through the dark, woodèd dell, and I was left  
Alone, alone.”

The other Satyr laughed,  
A laugh more hideous than the angry scowl  
Of his dark brows.

“ Forsooth, thy prying eyes  
Leave nothing sacred ; thou hast scared away  
A dozen maidens from these pleasant groves,  
So that through all the place a rumour flies  
That 'tis not safe to walk beneath these trees,  
And now thou venturerest unto the fount  
That's in the precinct of the palace walls.”

“ Truly,” the other said, “ you’re growing sage  
To taunt me with my cunning practices ;  
I love the maiden, and, by Tartarus,  
Will win her. Well I know her name and home,  
’Tis fair Hermione, the loved of all,  
The fairest maiden of these sunny parts.”  
“ Better be quiet,” growled the other one :  
“ She is the daughter of the ancient chief  
To whom that vast domain, which borders here,  
Belongs : thou wilt do ill to seek her hand.  
Love some vile shape that is a match for thine,  
Not what is fair.”

“ Why should I seek a mate  
From my own race, when I can win a form  
Lovely as goddess in Olympus bright.  
Sooner would I revolve upon the wheel  
For ever, ever in unceasing rounds,  
Than have as love one of these hideous beings.”  
“ Take care, old fool, or you will find e’er long  
That love has not thy rugged bosom stirred



For good: if you feel love for that bright face,

It is perchance a lure to ruin thee."

"Why ruin me; what could be worse than now,

To prowl about these woods in horrid skins,

Like the wild beast, and only know the thrill

Which wine sends through the veins: hot, fierce,

And maddening vintage, which intoxicates

And makes the feelings prone to devilish cares.

I'm not content. I shall assume the form

Of some fair hero, and appear to her

And win her love, and bring her to these haunts."

"Fools will be fools as long as asses' heads

Have long ears growing from them."

While these words

Were being spoken, gently stirred an elf,

Who all the conversation had o'erheard.

Lying tucked up in a small blossom's bell,

The light and lovely Myra, half asleep,

Had been awakened by their opening words.

She was a fairy bright; her body shone

Like ruby stone, and all the deep rich hues  
Of that fair gem were glist'ning on her breast.  
Her head was small, and of a topaz tint ;  
Two small blue eyes shone brightly out from it,  
Soft as turquoises : her thin gauzy wings  
Were tinted with the opal's various light ;  
And, as she lay rolled up in that sweet flower,  
She seemed a glist'ning star. Now, to herself  
She said, when these old Satyrs had left off,  
“ Forsooth, a comely maid may not come here  
But that she has to brook your horrid grin.  
Little you think that I have heard your words ;  
But Myra, you old villain, can e'en thwart  
Your base design. You sly, you cunning fox,  
You'll come to me to change your hideous form  
Into some fair and godlike youth. I'll do it ; yes,  
I'll send you on your courting with a face  
That to yourself shall seem most beautiful,  
To others such as only calls out laughter.  
Whene'er you speak the very trees shall laugh,

The ground set up a grin, and e'en the flowers  
Smile piteously ; and, raging at your ill-success,  
You'll tear your hair and come back to these groves  
To be the jeer and jest of all the Satyrs.

When the sun rose upon the morrow morn,  
And stole between the leaves of that cool wood,  
The Satyr sent for Myra, and desired  
To be changed to a fair and noble youth.  
Then Myra, at his bidding, led the beast  
Some way apart, and spoke a few strange words.  
The Satyr slowly changed : his grizzly head  
Lost all its bristles and repulsive skin,  
And in its place the features of a god.  
His hairy frame was altered to a form  
Of softest white ; the snow-like robe was spread  
O'er him to the feet ; his shaggy legs were gone,  
And in their place two well-shaped limbs were  
seen.  
His hoofs dropped off and hero's feet appeared.

The Satyr gazed sometime into a brook,  
And his new frame surveyed complacently ;  
Turned him about to see himself each side,  
And off he strutted with conceited swagger.  
But as he went, he said aloud, “ Now, now,  
I think that I shall win the maid to-day ;”  
And at his words two donkey’s ears shot up  
Beside his own, his nose swelled out, turned red,  
His chin became the visage of an imp  
That leered with horrid grin, and rolled its eyes.  
Then at his words the rustling trees did laugh,  
And the bright flowers a piteous smile displayed.  
Not knowing wherefore this strange merriment,  
The Satyr passed along towards a place  
Where he deemed that the maiden might be found.  
It was a lonely nook beside a stream ;  
High o’er the soft and rippling water rose  
The many-leav’d trees, while, by the banks,  
In cool recesses, grew the fairest flowers.  
Here were the sweet alluring hyacinths,

Their stately bells of many a beauteous tint ;  
Here were the joyous peonies in groups  
Like lovely damsels at a merry dance.  
Here grew the simple daisies, here sweet pinks,  
Some white as snow, others of richer hue  
Studded the mossy turf ; while straggling creepers  
Around the thick stems of the branching trees  
Grew carelessly, and many a bower wove ;  
The jasmine's perfume scented all the place,  
And the convolvulus from many a branch  
Dallied in air its variegated bloom.

In one of these recesses by the stream,  
On the moss floor, a lovely maiden lay,  
Lightly reclining with her head half-raised,  
Half-pillowed on some leaves ; she seemed as fair  
As any goddess of immortal life.  
Her rosy limbs glowed warmly through the robe  
Of thin white drapery that from her neck  
Was tastefully twined round her form.

Her face was grandly featured, her soft eyes  
Seemed to reflect the gentle blue above  
In crystal light ; her hair was of the hue  
Which morning loves to throw upon the world  
When, with his fiery steeds, the sun appears.  
And woven round her waist there was a belt  
Of fair azalias, and that tender flower  
In red and white lay scattered near her couch.  
A gentle smile lingered upon her face,  
As tho' her mind was picturing a dream  
That she had had in sleep. A rosy tinge  
Was on her cheek and neck, and as she lay  
Her beauty seemed divine. The Satyr gazed  
For some few moments in astonishment.  
His heart beat quick ; his love increased tenfold ;  
And dashing thro' the leaves, he stood before  
The lovely girl. She quickly rose and ran  
A few yards back ; but seeing that fair youth,  
With all the beauty of a god, she stopped,  
And waited for some greeting from his lips.

“ Fairest of earth ; fairest of all who live,  
I love thee—love thee with a tenfold might.  
Only be mine and these sweet groves are thine ;  
Thou’rt queen of all these scented palaces.”  
But as he spoke two asses’ ears sprang up  
Beside his own, his swelling nose turned red ;  
His chin transformed itself into an imp—  
A small and grinning imp, that rolled its eyes.  
Then all the trees did laugh, the flowers smiled,  
And the ground almost seemed to give a grin.  
Then at his words Hermione broke forth :

“ Hence, hideous fiend ! hence with your foolish

words

And ludicrous affection. I will bid  
My slaves to chase thee from this private grove,  
Which is my own, if you depart not soon.”  
Then the strange being tried to speak again,  
And murmured brokenly some foolish words ;  
But to his sounds only the laughter loud  
Broke out in echoes, so he fled away,

Vowing to have revenge upon the elf  
And on Hermione.

The maiden left

Thus to herself, gently lay down again  
Until two slaves came bearing her some fruits.  
She then arose, bound up her hair, and wove  
A wreath of white azalias round her head,  
And threw a lilac-tinted robe across  
Her bosom. Then her father came to her  
And begged that she would for a ramble go.  
Pleasantly thro' the trees they wander on,  
Resting betimes beneath the spreading boughs,  
Until coming into the open land beheld  
A fair and glorious city not far off.  
It was a noble place ; its buildings vast  
Were of white marble, and a busy throng  
Ever the spacious streets made full of life.  
Hermione, her eyes turned wistfully  
Towards the place, as if she wished to go.  
The old man said : " I will rest by this oak



While you unto the city haste awhile ;  
The young like to see life, and change, and bustle.”  
So leaving him, she went up to the walls,  
And passing 'neath the gates, made her swift way  
Towards a stately palace in the midst.  
Entering this building thro' a spacious hall  
Adorned with statues and with many a frieze  
Of the most rare and delicate designs,  
She passed into a richly furnished room,  
Where a young warrior carelessly reclined.  
He started as the peerless beauty came  
Into the chamber, and then rising, led  
The maiden to a couch, where he sat down  
Beside her. Neither spoke for a few moments.  
At last Hermione the silence broke :  
“ Silius,” she said, “ well may you be surprised  
To see me here, but I have much to say,  
And could not wait until by chance we met.  
Methinks that I am haunted ; that the gods  
Of the great wood have formed some evil plan

To lure me on to ill. I cannot bathe  
In the cool fount but that some horrid form  
Seems lingering by."

And then she told him all  
About the morning's guest, at which his face  
Grew strange and dark. After a while he spake :  
" O would that I might claim this royal prize ;  
Would that this lusty arm might ever guard  
You from all ill."

The young girl's face grew sad,  
And o'er the light of loveliness that beamed  
With such pure beauty, came a shadow dark.  
Then the young warrior, pressing nearer her,  
Burst out with fierce, impulsive eloquence :  
" Hermione, oh, know you what is love,  
To feel one's being thrilled with every bliss  
When by the loved one's side we find ourselves !  
Oh, I have known too deep, too fierce a love !  
Have felt for you a passion strong as death !  
Have loved you as the sweetest, fairest thing

The gods have given earth, and as a gem  
That I would sooner wear and guard withal  
Than e'en the rule of this majestic realm.  
Hermione, the light of your dear eyes  
Seems to throw over me a sense of joy,  
A rapturous feeling of the sweetest bliss !  
Oh, let me ever linger by your side !  
And may I pass my hand thro' these soft locks  
That, with their golden beauty, form a crown  
Fairer than ever circled human brow ?  
And may my lips meet yours, and in the kiss  
That's rich with all the soul's deep tenderness,  
Feel the communion of our spirits fond ?  
You are too beautiful for this poor earth."  
Softly his arms stole round the young girl's form,  
And folded to his heart the maiden lay ;  
But her wild sobs made Silius raise her head,  
And he beheld her eyes all full of tears,  
While her fair cheeks were passionately flushed.  
Her hands

Stole fondly round his neck, and her head dropped  
Again upon his heart : “ O Silius, dear,  
Do you not know that I have made a vow  
Never to love—to marry while my sire  
Lives in this world. I cannot break my vow,  
Altho’ I love you—oh, beyond all words.”  
For some few moments in a sweet embrace  
The two fond lovers lay entwined. But ah !  
She must away. Alas, the cruel pang  
That separation deals unto the soul  
Was theirs : awhile she lingers near his heart,  
That beats so fast. Again she strives to go :  
One last fond word, and lightly through the hall  
Her eager feet go pattering to the gate.  
And swiftly through the streets she passes then  
Back to the old man, who, beneath the trees,  
Lay fast asleep ; the flies they buzzed about  
And settled on his face. Hermione  
Sat down close by his side, and with a leaf  
From a tall plant she whisked away the flies ;

And thro' her mind the dream of love then went  
With slow soft steps, breathing around a sense  
Of happiness ; and as the fragrance of a flower  
Fills all the air around its tiny life,  
It gave a joy unto her whole existence.

Back thro' the woods the raging Satyr went,  
Cursing his fate, and swearing vengeance fierce  
On her who had thus scorned him and on Myra.  
The Satyrs in their wood were fond of wine,  
And now the bowl was passing to and fro,  
And merry laughter from their lips broke out,  
While under the tall trees they sat and drank.  
They called for songs, and to the music wild  
Of uncouth pipes, their ditties filled the air.  
Some danced in circles, making strange shrill cries,  
And still the glad'ning wine passed freely round ;  
Others lay rolling in the gentle grass,  
Their jovial spirits rising high and fierce.  
One old and ruddy tippler 'gan to sing

Somewhat like this, and all the others joined

In the loud chorus :

“ Let the wine god’s train be merry ;  
Drink, drink, thro’ the summer day ;  
Let the rich draught give us pleasure,  
Let’s to drinking devote our leisure,  
For that’s best for a summer’s day.

“ Oh, I love the wine god’s service,  
And I love the glorious pay,  
For it’s drink, drink, drink each hour,  
And the wine has a blissful power  
In the shade of a summer’s day.”

Scarce had the singer finished his strange song,  
When he rolled over and was soon asleep :  
Just then came bounding thro’ the deep set trees  
The angry Satyr from his fruitless quest.  
In his mad fury he had e’en forgot  
The shape he wore, and dashing in the midst,

He strutted up and down, and stamped his feet  
Upon the soil, exclaiming as he went—  
“ Scorned by the beauty, laughed at by the minx !  
To think the little fool should dare refuse  
My love ! But as I live I will revenge  
Myself upon the wench. Ah ! she shall rue  
The scorn she threw in her refusing words ! ”  
But as he spoke his visage underwent  
The self-same change, and all the jovial crew,  
Excited by their draughts of maddening wine,  
Set up a shout of laughter at the sight ;  
And as amid the roar he tried to speak,  
Their jeers came faster, so enraging him,  
That at the nearest dashing he fell down,  
And o’er him rolled a tipsy-headed beast.  
And in the riot, Myra from a tree,  
Where she had all beheld with roguish face,  
Came down and changed him to his Satyr form,  
At which they laughed the louder ; and the beast  
Rushed madly from the throng. Now, as he walked,

Still chafing from his treatment, thro' the woods,  
He made up how he would revenge himself  
Upon Hermione. How the next day,  
At the great hunt that would take place, he'd be  
Transformed into a boar ; and when the sire  
Of fair Hermione should pass along,  
He'd gore the old man unto death. Thus thought  
The angry Satyr ; and now cooler grown  
Walked back unto his crew, and threw himself  
Upon the ground, till sleep came o'er his eyes.'

Silius lived in a proud and stately hall  
Of the vast city—he of royal birth.  
His fair and glorious features were the love  
Of many a dark-eyed girl : his lusty limbs  
Had made him famous in the stirring chase,  
And his heroic spirit was the theme  
Of many a tongue : with all the grace and charm  
Which youth and beauty give unto the form,  
With all the splendours of ancestral line,



And all the virtues of unsullied life,  
The brave young Prince lived in his royal home  
Loving Hermione, and loved by her.

It was the morning of a royal chase.  
From many a mile heroes and chiefs had come  
To hunt the wild boar of the rugged woods.  
Assembled near the city was the throng  
Of gay and brilliant hunters. There was seen  
The crafty Pythos, with his sinewy limbs,  
His subtle spirit, and his piercing eye.  
No man from where the chestnut waves its leaves  
Beside the bright Ilæna, could compete  
With this proud chief. There sunny Vellius came,  
All laughter, as the gay light-hearted world  
When its fair flowers are glowing with the sun.  
He'd driven his stately steeds from Koreus City  
To hunt the shaggy beast. In all that part  
There was no fairer face than his—no eyes  
So full of light—and all the maidens sweet

Longed for his love. Sage and grisly Ornus,  
Who from the craggy peak beside the wave  
That ripples in the light to melody,  
Softer than ever Syrens breathed around  
From their enchanted home, had wound his way  
O'er many a rugged mile to that great meet—  
Ornus, whose fair and lily-featured maids  
Were fondly loved by many a sea-bred youth ;  
But the old Chief did list unto the wish  
They told to him with sullen countenance.  
He loved not that his old and lonely home  
Should be deserted, and the rumbling wave  
Fall on his ear without their gentle tones.  
Then the renowned Iræus, with his sons  
In number five—they all were stalwart men ;  
He who had driven foe before his spear,  
With these strong aids, many and many a time.  
His home in the far valley of the Greuse  
Was left to his dear wife ; the herdsman's horn  
Would shrilly wind at eve in those still vales,

And the true matron would go round the hall  
To see the many guards were at their posts.  
Glaucus, of kingly race, with long brown hair,  
That waved about him in the heat of chase,  
When panting to the front he left behind  
The other hunters : he was swift of foot ;  
None swifter in the land ; and he had come  
From where the fragrance of a softer clime  
Blends with the perfume of the Western isles,  
And left his young bride in his lordly home  
To wander by the myrtle trees at eve,  
And long for her brave lord's return. And there  
Iphis, the witty, whose glib trickling tongue  
Would ring out jests at the wild maddening feasts,  
Until the hall was full of merriment.  
Iphis, whose words so smooth and delicate  
Had oft the ear of gentle maiden won  
Unto his wish, when, in the glowing land  
Where he was Prince, he wooed their tender love.  
And the bluff Lathis, with a goodly train

Of followers—none more welcome there  
Than he ; for well his broad good-humoured face,  
His mighty shoulders, and his giant arms,  
Were known and gladly greeted in the land.  
By him was Horus—spear and dagger chased  
More plainly than the rest—whose robe was wound  
About him in the simplest way ; yet loved,  
Admired, respected more than all was he.  
His sunny humour lighted up the wood,  
Where he was wont to dwell ; and none came there  
And shared his hospitality, but loved  
To listen as his deep and splendid soul  
Poured itself out in pure and glowing words.  
He loved all beauty, and his gifted mind  
Would speak so gently, wisely, unto men,  
That they beheld in him a noble seer,  
Whose words were gold ; and beside this his life  
Was brave and noble, and he loved the sports  
That stalwart heroes love—so all the land  
Loved and respected Horus. Last of all,

With lagging step, came Melius to the throng ;  
He was a crafty liar ; none his word  
Would ever take. Deceitful in his ways,  
Yet useful, he was borne with for the glance  
Of his quick eye, which ever was the first  
To see the bounding game, and from afar  
Discern the swift flight of the soaring bird.  
Thus had the valiant chieftians come from far  
To join the royal chase upon this morn,  
And in a graceful car the lovely maid,  
The fair Hermione, drove gently in,  
With her great sire. The long white hair that hung  
So softly round his wise and tranquil face ;  
The fire that still gleamed in those piercing eyes ;  
The tall straight figure, the commanding mien,  
Awoke an awe and reverence in all.  
They crowd around the car, and greet with warmth  
The great old Prince ; they press the shrivelled hand,  
They pour forth many a word of kind delight ;  
And his eyes fill with tears of gratitude :

“ Kind friends, brave nobles, words are vain indeed  
To speak the feelings stirring in my heart ;  
My mind goes swiftly back to days of yore—  
Crossing the waves of years in one short moment—  
When I was young and strong as any here,  
Would start upon the quest ye all so love.  
But with the failing strength there comes to us  
Other and different ways : tho' the old stag  
Hears in his lair the winding of the horns,  
And starts longing to dare the tracking hounds,—  
And if, indeed, the wild light of the past  
Still plays with fitful beauty o'er my soul,  
And as the sound of music heard in youth,  
Calls up the memories of one's parted hopes,—  
So now I feel that I should love to mix  
Once more with you, and follow thus behind,  
Viewing the conflict that I cannot join.  
It gives the old heart joy to feel the warmth  
Of your strong hands ; and if these tears do fall,  
They're thro' your brave and manly words to me.”

And like a star just hovering on the verge  
Of a white cloud that throws its beauty out,  
The kind and lovely maiden stood beside  
And listened to their words. But now the sound  
Of horns, the baying of the dogs, recall  
The huntsmen to the sport, and through the wood  
Beneath the wild and stately branches goes  
That eager throng intent upon the chase.

The Satyr lay alone upon this morn.

Myra was watching him from a small flower  
Near where his limbs were stretched ; his face was  
dark

And troubled, and his grisly skin seemed blurred  
With thick black mud. The little sprightly elf  
Was thinking to herself what were his thoughts,  
Longing indeed to pierce that gloomy brow.  
“It is not good,” she thought, “what he is planning :  
Would that I could discover his design.”  
Lightly she flew to where he lay, and said,

“ You seem as tho’ your mind was full of pain :  
What is the matter ? ”

But the monster growled  
Some angry words, and turned his head away.  
The truth is he was soon to change his form  
Unto a savage boar, but in that shape  
Should he be struck by spear, his own dark life  
Would suffer from the blow ; he longed to ask  
The little fairy for her guarding power,  
But knew that she would thwart his foul intent.  
“ What is the matter ? ” said again the elf.  
“ Nothing that is of consequence to you,”  
Was the reply.

“ Cannot I give you aid ? ”  
Myra inquired.

“ Begone,” the Satyr said,  
“ I do not want you ; do you think I wish  
To have the forest laugh at me again,  
To be the jest of all my rude compeers.”  
So Myra went away. She could not tell



The Satyr's mind, but deemed that ill was meant.  
Rarely that face was overcast but wrong  
Was brooding in that shaggy-covered heart.

Merrily thro' the forest went the throng,  
With fair Hermione driving her car  
Behind the rest. They talked and laughed full well,  
The sunny morning filling all their hearts  
With cheerful thoughts, and thrilling every soul  
With the rich vintage of her glorious cup.  
"Fair is the day," said Pythos, "bright the sun,  
The wild boars in these woods will miss some mates  
E'er the light fades : by Hercules I know  
If this bright spear is hurled from this strong hand,  
Some beast will bite the dust."

Then Iphis turned,  
And with a twinkle in his small bright eyes,  
Said quickly, "Yes, some beast will bite the dust,  
And, perhaps, another bite the slaughtered boar."  
"What mean you," said the quick and ready Chief,

"Think you that none but thee will feast on it."

"Come, come," said Lathis, "the gods grant at  
least

Your weapons are as sharpened as your tongues.

As for my part, the flesh may be your gain :

Give me the skin that will last long and well,

When the rich meat has melted in your mouths."

"True, Lathis," said old Ornus, "and give me

The horns for drinking cups, that hold the draught

Of good rich wine ; thus I shall be best off,

Having in one what you possess together."

"Ornus," said Iphis, "knows well how to choose

What's good and fair : would that those lovely  
ones

That he so guards had fallen to the lot

Of one who prized them less. You shut them up

Like miser does his gold, as tho' they're made

Merely to wander in your roomy halls."

"I keep them, Iphis, for some rarer bird

Than you. Think you that they, e'en as your words,

Were meant for all who come across their path.  
The kite that feeds on carrion does not mate  
With the pure dove."

Then Iphis fiercely turned,  
And would have made a still more biting speech,  
But that his bitterness was held back then  
By the fair words of Glaucus, who came up,  
And gently calmed the passion of the chief.  
Smiling he said, " Ah ! well, 'tis doubless true  
Their beauty is bewitching, and the gods  
Mean such rare charms for high and noble souls,  
And you, my friend, may win one of them yet."  
" Pity," said Iphis, " that your wife's away,  
I vow she would be pleased to hear your praise."  
Then Horus, gently moving up, exclaimed  
To Glaucus, " How that woodbine clings around  
Those sturdy trees, and throws its wooing arms  
About the branches with an eager love.  
O friend, I love the woods, for they are full  
Of life, life of the gentlest, highest kind.

There is no spot, perhaps, where deeper words  
Are breathed than in the shady, tree-clad land.  
There comes such perfect solace from the flowers,  
Such sympathy with nature's heart from all  
The fragrance they give out, and such a strength  
These mighty giants of the world inspire ;  
I look at them standing for years the same,  
With the same spirit of resistless strength.  
And then where do you see in finer light  
The various changes of the year ? Where do  
You better learn the sad yet certain truth  
Of the decay and change that live in all ?  
At evening, with the deep blue world above,  
And all the painted grandeur of the sky,  
Shedding its glories on all sides, I know  
No place where we may better muse and think  
Upon the mysteries of the world beyond."  
" Iphis," said Ornus, " 'twas not my intent  
Just now to speak so sharply unto you,  
I pray thee let it pass."

“I thought,” replied

The other with a curl upon his lip,

“You had forgot yourself.”

“What mean you now ?

Had I expected this response, full well

You would not then have heard from me the words

I have just spoken, churl as well as knave.”

“Do not commit another wild mistake,

In the atoning for the first,” he said.

“By the great gods,” said Ornus, “I will pluck

That slippery eel-like monster from your mouth,

If you refrain not your envenomed words.”

“I pray thee calm thyself,” Lathis here said,

“You must give Iphis room to wag his tongue,

Like you give foxes running ground, or let

The lizard have its crevice in the wall.”

Now by the car with fair Hermione,

And her old sire, the brave young Silius walked.

The prattle of young hearts o'erfull with joy,

To be together, and pour out their thoughts,  
Flowed in delicious streams from both their lips.  
The aged prince admired the noble youth,  
And kindly spoke to him of the old days  
When he was young and eager, and the deeds  
That he had done. Thicker the wood became :  
Then the old chief alighted from his car,  
Walking along with Ornus.

Silius came

Close to Hermione, and somehow stopped  
Or hindered in their way, the graceful two  
Found themselves quite alone. The young girl's  
cheek

Grew fairer with the crimson beauty there,  
As 'mid the silent grandeur of the place  
They looked into each other's eyes, and felt  
The fiery passion glowing in their hearts.  
Quicker they haste and come upon the rest,  
Now wandering all alert. Far in the depths  
Of the old forest were they by this time.

Ornus had raised his spear, and the old Chief  
A little way aside just then had stepped,  
When through the trees was heard a mighty rush,  
Some branches crackled loud, and a huge beast  
Came bursting through, and fiercely drove his tusk  
Deep down into the old man's breast. One cry—  
Short, quick, and smothered—and he sunk down there  
The sad but beautiful remains of life,  
With all the fair and sacred look of age  
Still resting gently on the still bright face.  
When the cry rose, Hermione leapt forth  
Towards her sire ; the boar turned rapidly  
And made away. But the young Silius hurled,  
With quick and splendid aim, his glittering spear,  
And the wild beast staggered unto the ground.  
Then, when the animal lay wounded there,  
He tried to change, and awe the gathered throng,  
Who deemed that he was dead, because he lay  
Nigh motionless. But when arose a head  
Both wild and grisly, and with blood bedewed,

They shuddered at the sight. The wild beast's frame,  
Deformed and hideous, struggled on the ground  
Between the two conflicting lives. But then  
Stout Lathis drew his sharp and deadly sword,  
And dashed towards the monster ; hewed his head  
Almost in two, so that the sad dark life  
Rushed fiercely down into the realms of woe.  
Hermione lay on the ground, her face  
Close to her father's. Passion overcame  
Her gentle bosom, as she saw the form  
Rising from out the beast.

“Dastard,” she said,  
“Thou’st cruelly slain my weak and aged sire,—  
Slain him who never wronged the frailest life  
That lay about his path ; whose days were calm  
And peaceful as the sleep of innocence ;  
Whose words and deeds were soft and beautiful  
As the grey silvery hair of his great age.  
Slain him—for what ? Oh, cursed be your life !  
May the dark fiends of sombre Tartarus



Haunt and distress thy everlasting years !  
May thy soul know the fiercest ills that e'er —— ! ”  
But here she stopped, for Lathis drove his sword  
Into the monster's head. She turned and wept :  
“ My own, my brave, good, tender friend. Oh, dark  
And horrid is the thought that thou art gone,  
Slain in this cruel and fearful way. Yes, gone !  
Can nothing bring thee back ? Must this dear face  
Never know warmth and feeling here again ?  
How sweet the morning was with thy dear hand  
Pressed on my shoulder—now the world to me  
Is dark and bitter. Oh, my poor, dear sire !  
Leave me, I pray thee, to my great wild grief,  
And let me weep alone with him I loved.”  
They slowly left her, going sadly thence,  
Sorry, indeed, for him who thus had died.

Left to herself, Hermione lay stunned  
For some time on the earth ; her short quick sobs  
Breaking the silence of the solemn woods.

Then presently the hot tears, rushing out,  
Stole down her cheeks, and made the summer grass  
Wet with their dew. There still and lifeless lay  
The old man, who had loved her with a love  
Beyond all earthly things—and was he gone  
The dark and awful way from life to death?  
In a short moment all had changed for him,  
And now where was he? Then she slowly rose  
And wiped away the blood, and covered up  
The wound, and gently laid upon his breast  
A few white flowers that grew about the place.  
Then, sitting down beside him, took his hand,  
And tried to follow in her thoughts the way  
His spirit had departed to its rest.  
And then came back to her a curious dream  
That she had had in some past hour of night,  
Thinking it over to herself like this :  
“ Once came a vision from the house of sleep,  
And showed at nightfall to my slumbering mind  
The picture of a spirit passing home

From this sad world. It wandered by a stream  
Where water coolly flowed o'er marble rocks,  
And where a myriad lovely forms were seen.  
About the stream grew many various flowers,  
The Naiads took the spirit through those waves,  
And bathed her in the silvery tide at eve,  
Making her fairer. On the spirit passed  
Into a land of sunshine and of flowers ;  
The blossoms wove a wreath of their fair leaves  
And placed it on the spirit's brow, who passed  
Away, and so from one realm to another,  
Until the Elysian fields stretched out before her ;  
And lovelier than the light, when first it springs  
From off its couch with limbs all warm and flushed  
And glowing thro' the veil of thin fair gold  
With dainty beauty, shone the spirit there.  
Ah me, how can I foster such sweet dreams,  
When here beside me lies the sad sad corpse  
Of him whom I so loved. Gods, what is death ?  
Can this be death ? this cold and silent form—

This form that makes all being dark and horrid,  
The very thought of which appals and chills.  
Oh, would that I could lie down by his side  
And sleep the same deep sleep. What has life now  
For me but sadness. Would that I could change  
My fate with his : ever since childhood's hours  
Have we together lived, and now the thread  
That bound us is for ever snapped in two.  
Oh, not for ever ! Still how long a time  
Must pass before I kiss that soft white brow  
With all life's pulses beating there again ?"  
Here she wept long and bitterly ; saw not  
The fair and godlike Silius watching her  
With a distressed face. When she gently stirred,  
He spoke to her ; then slow and soft his voice  
Came to her ears : " Weep not so fiercely, dear ;  
I would that I could lie there in his place  
Rather than your dear heart be torn with pain.  
'Tis sweeter for the dead than they who weep  
Beside the empty vase of life. They know

No bitterness : all that is passed for them."

Quickly she turned, and looked into his eyes,  
As tho' to read the secret of his mind.

" Ah, Silius, know you not how much I loved  
My father ? Know you not that all my life  
He was so good and kind that not a thing  
I ever wanted but was mine at once ?"

" I know it, dear, and sad is the sharp blow  
Which separates you from your fondest friend.  
He is at rest, and that is solace oft  
To those who weep beside the loved one's dust."

" How do you know what lies beyond this life ?  
Is there no terror in the thought of it ?"

" I do not dread to die. Why should I fear  
To tread the path that millions have before ?  
Why should I feel distress that pain and grief  
Are over ? that the dear and loving ones—  
For well you know my parents both are dead—  
That have the silent valley passed along,  
And wait me in the land of light and love,

I soon should see again ? The myriad hosts  
That have departed, may not make the pang  
Which separates my body from its soul  
Less keen and agonising, but the mind  
Knoweth no terror. From their distant home  
Each night the stars whisper into our souls,  
Inspiring us with hope and confidence.  
Yes, peace is sweet ; the thought that all is o'er—  
No trouble, care, no lingering bitterness  
For those who here have laboured and are gone.”  
“ Yes, that is sweet, but the dark void we feel  
When one we love is dead ; the emptiness,  
The sense of desolation in our souls :  
That is to me so wearisome and sad.”  
“ Ah, darling, time will take all that away,  
And love, such pure and tender love as yours,  
May find another nest, after a time,  
And the bright flowers about your path will smile,  
With their old beauty ; and the light of life,  
Which was as tho' it had gone out, may glow

With its old brilliancy. You will again  
Be happy with the deep and holy thought  
That there is one smiling on you from where  
Only the bliss of happiness is felt."

Softly she moved close to his form, and threw  
Her arms about his neck ; her gentle tears  
Flowed freely, until growing more resigned  
She lay in his embrace without a sob.

## **THE SONG OF ARION.**





## THE SONG OF ARION.



### I.

BRIGHTLY shines the noonday sunlight  
O'er the waves of yonder sea,  
Rolling with a haughty grandeur  
'Neath the heavens soft and free ;  
And the sails of yonder vessel,  
Flying swiftly with the wind,  
Leaving wild and rocky headlands  
In the dim haze, far behind.  
Ah ! Sicily, thy splendours,—  
The stern rough coast of thine,  
The mellow light that tinges,  
With many a hue divine,

The glorious scenes within thee,—  
Are left ; the tender grove,  
The vine-clad hills, the valleys  
Where whispering lovers rove,  
All now are left—thy grandeurs  
Fade swiftly from the eye,  
And in the soft light of the past  
With paling splendour lie.

## II.

There's one sits in the vessel  
Who is rich with many a prize,  
Won by that delicious music  
That with Orpheus' music vies.  
Far behind the island seems now,  
Far away its craggy shore :  
He can fancy well those beauties  
That are left for evermore ;

In his memory is the picture,  
Fair with many a touching hue,  
Of those days of happy triumph  
That as lightning by him flew.  
And as lightning gleamed with splendour,  
Sudden, beautiful, and grand,  
A lone beacon glancing brightly  
Over life's strange varying strand.

## III.

Well, he sits and muses sadly  
On those hours that are gone ;  
And his head droops slowly downwards  
Till it leans his hand upon ;  
Then the tears start thro' his eyelids—  
“ Would these waves were overpast ;  
Would that I were safe at Corinth,  
And with those I love, at last.

I like not the low murmurings,  
The dark looks of these rude men :  
I am alone, and these rich treasures  
Are what they wish, I ken.”  
Ye gods, protect thy creature,  
Watch o'er the minstrel's way,  
And the light of fairer regions  
Will around his being play.  
Then a robe of sunlight beauty  
Will be his royal gown,  
And safely he shall hasten  
To the walls of Corinth town.

## IV.

They come, those rude fierce sailors !  
They wrest from him his own ;  
Wildly he asks them for his life—  
“ Leave that—if that alone ! ”

They laugh at his pale visage,  
Scoff at his trembling form ;  
His limbs are more unsteady  
Than the great mast in a storm.  
They tell him that life's closing,  
That with the sunlight proud  
His frame will lie beneath the wave,  
The white foam for its shroud.  
He looks around in agony,  
His visage worn and pale ;  
The sea-gull flying near him  
Hears not his bitter wail ;  
Nor does the overspreading blue  
List to his piteous tale.  
Ah ! perhaps, when morning's beauty  
Tinges the rolling wave,  
Those birds will be the spirits  
That watch above his grave ;  
The stars, as solemn sentinels,  
On many a golden throne,

Will smile above the lonely tomb  
That is to all unknown.  
He begs that they will grant him  
Only one last request,  
That he may play some melody  
Before death gives him rest :  
Let him sing some tender lyric  
Ere the waves his form invest.

## v.

He wanders some way from them,  
His heart torn with its throes ;  
He thinks, with poignant sadness,  
On the life that's now to close ;  
He sees in wild procession  
Its hopes, and joys, and woes ;  
And then he murmurs brokenly  
These words of wandering thought,  
As tho' the terrors of the grave  
Had madness in him wrought :—

“ Love, as the scented blossom  
That grows around the tomb,  
And spreads its fragrant beauty  
Above the home of gloom,  
Has been my sad possession ;  
I saw the flowers of light  
Smiling with gentle promise,  
But they vanished into night.  
The vase that held the perfume  
Was lovely as the day,  
But its scented spirit faded  
Into the air away,  
Like the breath of spring-time blossoms  
That only a moment stay.  
I saw the glowing sweetness  
Of her whose love I sought  
Fade as a star from vision,  
Or from the mind a thought.  
Gods ! it doth make one bitter  
To think how joys will fade ;



How the wreath of trembling passion  
In the grave will soon be laid ;  
How the bosom of longing youth  
Will be pierced by sorrow's blade.

## VI.

“ Ah ! as a maiden lingers  
Beside a much-loved flower,  
Whose incense-chalice sweetens  
The breath of summer's hour,  
And weeps that now its beauty  
Is nipped by frosty night,  
That nevermore that treasure  
Will glad her longing sight,  
Beside the flowers of friendship,  
The full ripe fruits of life,  
I weep—for now they perish  
Beneath the murderer's knife.

The subtle thread of passion  
Was snapped, alas ! in two,  
And now my dearest pleasures  
Fade from my tearful view.  
How glad beside the waters  
Do these fond beings wait  
That bark which bears the minstrel  
With speed to Corinth gate :  
Soon will they mourn with bitterness  
His sad and evil fate."

## VII.

They gave him till the morning—  
Left him with gloomy frown.  
" Gods ! what chance have I," thought he,  
" Of reaching Corinth town ?"  
The sun rose on the morrow  
From out that lonely deep,

The vast expanse of water  
Lay as in sombre sleep ;  
Then came a golden glitter  
Over the rolling wave,  
And streaks of violet beauty  
Just tinge the heavens grave.  
Higher that noble sovereign  
Rises from out his rest,  
And robes of richest purple  
His glory now invest.  
The soft sweet tints of violet  
Are lost in hues of light ;  
And with his glittering armour  
He rises to full sight.  
Arion watched that rising,  
Turned with a sigh away :  
What joy for him the splendours  
Of another lovely day.  
Led to the deck, he slowly  
Takes up his well-known lyre,

Runs dreamily his hand across,

As tho' were gone the fire

That once had held in rapture

The courts of many kings,

And borne the souls of listeners

Away on music's wings.

But soon his spirit quickens,

Along the strings it flies,

His soul has burst its fetters,

And sweet and soft there rise

These tender words, with music

That wafts them to the skies.

VIII.

“ Fair maiden of my fondest love,

Oft hast thou filled my lyre

With rich and glorious melody,

With bursts of deep poetic fire ;

Oft hast thou in the moonlit glades,  
Soft with the summer air,  
Come, on the wings of tender eve,  
To breathe thy spirit there ;  
And bade me sing of gentlest themes,  
The beauty of the flower,  
The colours of the deepening light  
That tinge the sunset's hour ;  
And oft in courts where grandeur  
Rules with imperial sway,  
Thy voice, with finest music,  
Has borne my soul away,  
That rushing with th' inspired sense  
I swept thro' fancy's realm,  
And with a stream of magic sounds  
My words the throng o'erwhelm.  
Then of the fierce and maddening fight  
Was in the banquet hall my song :  
Mightier than wine thy influence  
Whirled my stirred soul along.

And all these precious trophies  
Are thine, and thine alone ;  
The minstrel plays but at thy will,  
And doth thy power own.  
Forbear, forbear, that these fierce men  
Should reft from me my gain ;  
Come, gentle maiden, to my aid,  
And bid that they refrain ;  
From thy high palaces descend,  
And me to succour deign."

## IX.

Now, when the song was finished  
That from the minstrel's lyre  
Rose o'er the wild vast ocean,  
Struck with enraptured fire,  
The poet gazed in wonder,  
Saw on the rosy wave

A troop of ocean's fairies—

Oh, come they him to save !

Swiftly thro' the mighty billows

They an easy pathway cleave,

Swiftly hastening to the vessel—

Gods ! can he his eyes believe.

Like the dewdrops smiling softly

In the stately blue-bell's flower,

Gleam their heads of azure beauty,

As they o'er the waters tower.

Like the waves of glowing sunlight

Streaming through the tinted pane

In a fair and blushing window

Of some grand and ancient fane,

Seem the waves around those creatures,

Bathing many a gorgeous breast ;

And the foam-white billows cluster

Around many a purple crest.

With them many a glorious dolphin,

That the ocean loves full well,

Girded to a car of splendour

Fairer than the pearl-hued shell.

To the vessel's side they hasten.

All amazed those sailors stand,

Gazing dumbly at the splendours

Of that strange and lovely band.

Now the joyful minstrel passes

Thro' the pale affrighted crew

In the car he calmly sits him,

Car of sweet and pearl-like hue.

X.

Far away they swiftly bear him,

Far away o'er many a wave ;

Far away thro' roaring billows

That their coloured plumage lave ;

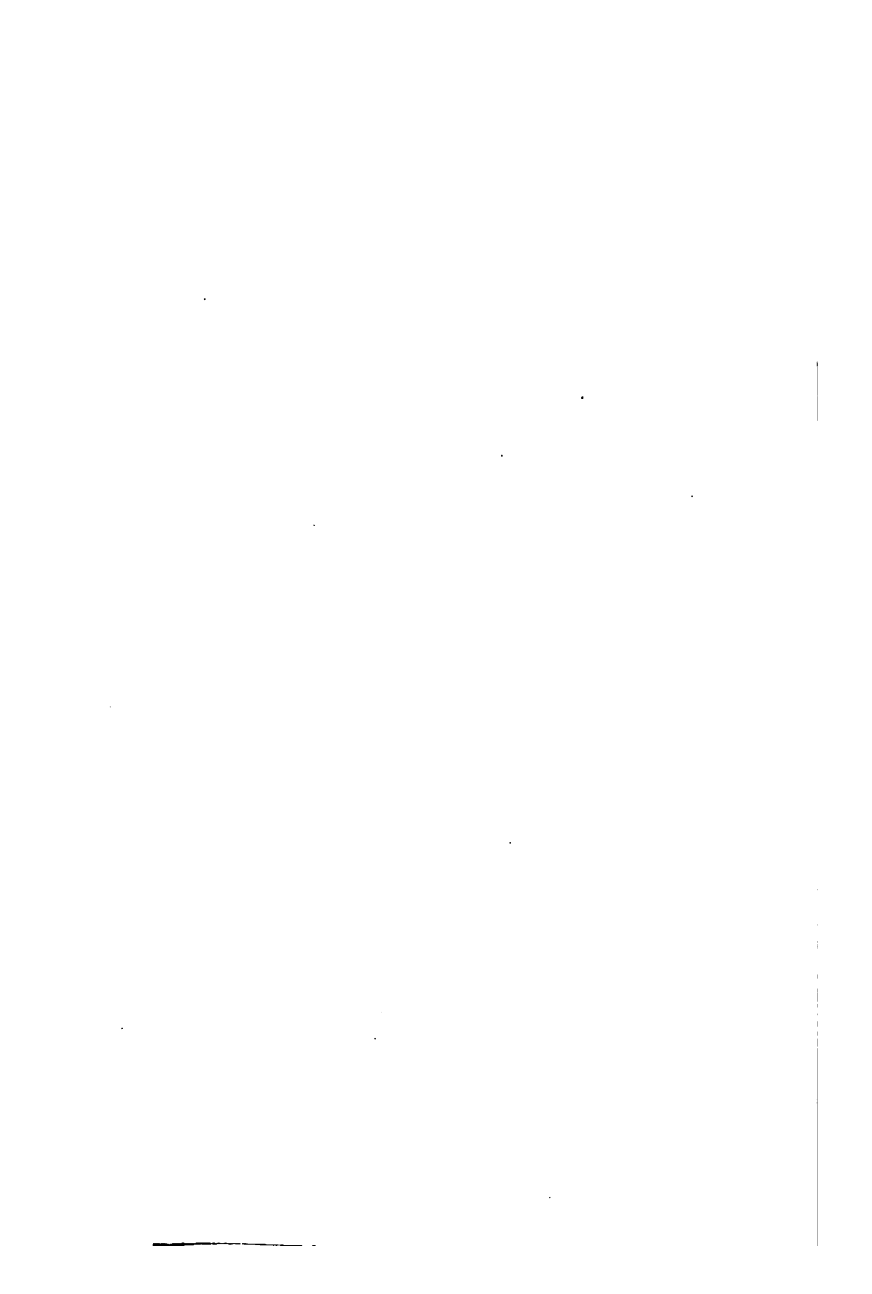
Far away with rosy morning

Tinging all the playful sea,



Far away, with tender moonlight  
Sweetly smiling as they flee ;  
Far away by sunny islands  
And by many a lovely shore  
Where the myrtle's mellow odour  
Waves their floating figures o'er ;  
Far away where light acacias  
Spring beside the sea-washed ground,  
And where oleander-fragrance  
Scents the still air all around ;  
Far away by noble forests,  
Growing near the rushing streams,  
And by many a snowy palace  
That with marble beauty gleams ;  
Far away by groves of flowers,  
Where the rose with dew hangs down,  
Where the leaves of the acanthus  
Many a graceful column crown,  
And by proud and glorious buildings  
Safe into fair Corinth town.

## **HIERO AND HERTHA.**



## HIERO AND HERTHA.



'Twas evening when upon the sunny waves,  
That rippled near a small and wooded isle,  
Glided a little bark—a fancy toy,  
Its sides inlaid with many a curious shell ;  
Its masts of richly scented wood, the sails  
Embroidered with the blossoms of the spring.  
At the helm sat its only mariner,  
Steering the craft towards a little creak,  
Where gliding 'neath the overhanging leaves,  
It gently pauses by a mossy bank.  
Springing to shore at once, he makes it fast,  
And passes from the beach into the wood.  
'Twas cool and pleasant in the leafy shade.  
But Hiero little marked what lay around.

Ever upon the path his eyes were bent—  
Deep hazel eyes, in which a spirit breathed  
Full of sad earnestness. Dark hair hung round  
His stately brow, as one has seen the leaves—  
The russet leaves—of autumn round the top  
Of some white marble column ; and a wreath  
Of sparkling gems, entwined and strung amid  
The valley's treasures, glittered brightly there.  
Soon a fair palace rose upon his right,  
Turning, he quickly bent his steps to it.

Now by this time the moon had crept between  
The curtains of the world unto her throne,  
And from her queenly sceptre flung the hues  
Of pearl-like sweetness o'er those marble walls.  
Rich orange groves clustered about the pile,  
And from their fragrant blossoms sweetly came  
The incense which they breathed unto the stars.  
Grandly that palace, as he saw it, rose,  
And sweetly evening gathered round its towers,

Floating about the mountains of the East.  
At a small window stood his longing wife ;  
She was a lovely being with a robe  
Of light blue silk, and long fair golden hair  
Flowing about her shoulders in wild waves.  
Ah, something more than earthly loveliness  
Seemed in those features as she waiting stood.  
For, as about the statue of a saint  
In some cathedral's solemn sanctuary,  
The moonlight through a tinted window streams,  
And seems to clothe it in the glorious robes  
The spirit wears in those bright halls above,  
Streamed the mild moonlight of that summer eve  
Over her figure, clung about her brow,  
And wrapt her in a sweet ethereal glow.  
She started, blushed, as she beheld his form,  
And turned away as tho' to meet his steps.

Hiero and Hertha ruled that glorious isle.  
'Twas their domain ; no other sceptre swayed  
The regal power. Prosperity and joy

Were the companions of each happy home.  
They were beloved ; their rule was simple, just,  
In union with the laws creating good.

Now thro' the corridors he swiftly passed,  
Hastening to join his queen, whom, when he saw,  
He sprang towards and lovingly embraced.  
It was a splendid hall in which they stood,  
Hung round with wondrous tapestries ;  
The fretted roof of orange-gold was jewelled  
With many a stone, and glittered like the hall  
In which imagination paints the throne  
Of her whom fancy terms the Queen of Gems.  
“ At last, at last thou'rt come,” Hertha broke forth,  
As she hung lovingly about his neck.  
The words were broken, for they came between  
Her passionate kisses. “ Eve has seemed so long,  
And at the window I have watched it, dear ;  
Its changing hues, the sunset, and the dusk.  
Oh, how I blessed each star as in the crown  
Of night, from the choice casket of bright day

It fell, and shone with glory overhead !  
And oh how sweet again it is to feel  
The richness of thy kiss—that wine of love  
Sipped from the rosy chalice of thy lips.  
See here, I've passed the hours in painting this ;  
Look at the maiden sitting by the waves,  
And watching the blue sky, even as I  
Have watched awhile this eve. Her eyes are full  
Of tears, for passion, trembling on the dawn  
Of hope, half fearing for its fate, seems now  
Hovering within her heart ; but see the star,  
The evening star, with fair and solacing rays,  
Comes slowly out, and her sad look departs.  
But, darling, I am talking foolishly  
Whilst thou art sad. Oh, tell me why it is.”  
“ I cannot yet, a little while let pass  
And I will tell thee all. Oh, we have had  
Such joy that sorrow almost seemed to pass  
Our spirits over ; but at last she comes—  
For as a cloud will glide above yon light,



And break up all the splendours thrown about,  
So has a cloud come o'er the light of life.  
Of this anon. I'm weary now and faint.  
Bid them, my darling, bring a little fruit."  
Bearing a golden chalice of rich wine  
A maiden entered, others followed her,  
With many a fruit full luscious to the taste.  
Others bore vases variously stained—  
Here a soft carmine-tinted ground set off  
By bunches of forget-me-nots ; another blue  
With garlands of fair roses. One there was,  
Richer than all the rest, with perfume stored :  
A woman, spirit p'rhaps, upon a throne  
Of figured gold, adorned with precious gems,  
Thro' a bright lake of sunshine, by four steeds  
With silken coats, and wings of gossamer  
Tinted as opals, to her realm was borne.  
Hertha from this bathed Hiero's brow awhile,  
But with her kisses interspersed the dew,  
As though she thought they would do more than all.

After a little while, when he had sipped  
The pleasant wine and tasted the ripe fruit,  
He spoke to her :—" Oh, Hertha, woe is near !  
I have been sailing round our little isle,  
And lo ! on every hand the waves increase.  
No marvel that men shake their heads and sigh.  
The ancient prophecy will soon, I fear,  
Have brought about its solemn fate. E'en now  
Each dash of those bright waters bring the doom—  
The doom of ruin nearer to our hearths.  
For ages long ago it was foretold  
This isle should vanish, that the waves should rise  
And sweep above it, over fields and homes,  
Filling the valleys, hiding every hill,  
Till not a vestige of our land remained :  
And where a paradise was wont to smile  
Would the wild waters through long ages roll.  
'Tis hard to leave this dear delicious place  
For what we little know ;—some say a realm  
Of fairer beauty, which will be our home

For ever ; but we have been happy here.  
Why should the place, hallowed by years of joy,  
Bound up with many a blissful hour, be torn  
From us. To-morrow, darling, will we pass  
Through all the land we love, and bid farewell  
To it."

"Hiero," she answered, "not for ill  
Have the wise spirits willed this fearful doom.  
We must not doubt the goodness of that power  
Which fashioned us, this isle, and all it boasts ;  
Which through long ages has at evening placed  
Yon gems upon the robes of distant night ;  
Has given beauty to the flowers, and blessed  
Our fruit-trees and our corn-fields with their stores ;  
And above all, has given us the love,  
The everlasting love, which makes us cleave  
To one another. Oh, we cannot doubt,  
When we remember all these blessed gifts.  
But sleep now, dear, and when the light comes round  
We'll take our way and visit all the land."

## II.

The morning light streamed o'er the palace roof.

Hiero was up and pacing the vast hall.

Their car was ready, 'mid the groves it stood ;

And Hertha, with her tearful eyes bent down,

Followed him slowly to their equipage.

Seated within the car, they moved away.

A troop of maidens with fair wreaths of flowers

Woven amid their hair and hanging down

Upon soft cheeks full of the passion, life,

The thrilling hopes of youth, walked slowly first.

Then came as many youths, and then the car

Of damask wood carved with exquisite skill,

And drawn by snowy steeds. The car passed on,

But both were silent. Each fair scene to them

Had some sweet memory blended with its charms.

They passed by lordly mansions, whose vast halls,

Decked with armorial bearings, 'scutcheons proud,

Told of the ancient lineage, valorous deeds,  
Ennobling those who dwelt within their walls ;  
By aged towers now covered with the growth  
Of many a year, and mouldering to the dust,  
Like an old man upon the eve of death ;  
By stately temples whose white marble walls,  
In the full golden light of smiling day,  
Shone as a casket of fair ivory.

They passed through valleys full of trees and woods,  
And cottages embosomed in the leaves  
Of the fair orchards clustering round their walls,  
Heavy with fruit, on which the autumn's kiss  
Had yet to leave its ripening sweetness. On  
And on they passed, where purple tresses hung  
From the brown vineyards of the sunny plains ;  
And over hills clad with the stately growth  
Of aged cedars with their perfumed wood ;  
By rippling lakes, where many a snowy sail  
Floated across the drowsy waters, as the flakes  
Of cloudland fleet above the summer sky ;

And now through glades where the fair sunlight  
passed

To light up birds flying among the leaves.

Myriads in brightly sparkling robes are there,

And all appear as though some lovely queen

Had from her brow removed a glittering crown,

And flung the jewels into the leafy air.

And flowers too are strewn upon the ground,

Small blooms that peep about with smiling eyes,

And tapered lilies with their snowy bells,

Each a cool nest in which the gentle dew

Might hide itself, and kiss away to death

The delicate white spirit dwelling there.

Where'er they passed there was but one sad tale

Imprinted on the features of the throng

Crowding around the chariot of their king.

"Is there no hope," went up from breaking hearts,

And rose above the stillness, as the breath

Of a hot mighty wind sweeps o'er a land

That, e'er the tempest broke, was still as sleep.

But still the car passed on. Hertha's pale face  
Was pressed against the bosom of her lord ;  
She wept with bitterness, her heart unstrung  
At the wild sorrowing cries. His head was low,  
Pressed hard against his hands, and heavy sobs  
Broke from his bosom as he heard the throng.  
A mountain rose about the middle point,  
And to its summit 'twas resolved to go.  
None would pass first, so Hiero led the way ;  
The toilsome road led over rugged rocks,  
Some thickly hung with the soft mountain moss ;  
The path was torn in ruts by the fierce streams  
That, welling from the bosom of the hill,  
Had leapt to light, and bounding over crags  
Dashed fiercely down the ravine to the vale  
Far, far beneath, and joining, rolled along  
As one great stream, till nobly swelling out  
Into a river ; then as river swept  
Thro' banks of gentle green unto the sea.  
Then the throng, following Hiero, slowly passed

Unto the mountain. Here we pause awhile  
To tell how such a paradise was doomed  
To pass away. Unto a gloomy realm,  
The palace of the King of Night, we turn.

## III.

It was a spacious cavern. All alone  
Amid its gloom, a figure lay full length ;  
Not human, yet there was a human trait  
About the shaggy limbs, the deep brown face,  
And the wild look he cast about his realms.  
His dark red hair in long curls quivered o'er  
A strange repulsive face. Stirring awhile  
He slowly raised himself, as thro' the gloom  
A pale beam sprang, which fairer, brighter grew,  
Until the cavern with its rays was lit ;  
Then a bright figure slowly floated in.  
The monster trembled when her form he saw,



Yet, with an effort gathering up his strength,  
Spoke slowly thus unto his lovely guest :—  
“ Long years have hastened thro’ my gloomy realm  
Since the sad morn I saw thy features last.  
The Child of Light, the parent of the stars,  
Can have no sympathy with such as I.  
Oh, wherefore come to break upon my woe,  
To brightly gild the region of despair,  
To light up gloom merely to make it feel  
Its own intensity ?” Slowly the Spirit,  
As a sweet murmur rising, answered him :—  
“ Oh, well thou knowest why I’m here this night ;  
I did not leave my throne beyond the stars,  
Put off my crown of gems, or throw aside  
My robes of state, to vex thy mighty woe.  
The time now cometh,—is alas, too nigh,—  
When the dark curse thy lips long ages back  
Uttered in fury, gathers o’er the isle,  
The sweetest isle that e’er the sea begirt.  
Yes, the doom darkens o’er those happy scenes,

Like a wild bird above a summer flower,  
Ready to pluck and with it fly away.  
'Tis in thy power, and in thy power alone  
To save the creatures whom I love, the land  
I gave them for their home in the long past.  
O, Son of Night, whose sable robes in vain  
Try to shut out the stars that gleam above,  
I pray thee to be merciful, and I  
Will gladly give whate'er thou mayest ask."  
" Shall I forego the draught which for so long  
I've waited, now it bubbles to my mouth,  
And flows against my longing lips as dew,  
Cooling their parched up heat ? Shall I forego  
The only drop of sweetness that will e'er  
Through all the long dark ages flow to me ?  
Oh, what has made my bitterness seem less :  
The memory that an hour would surely come  
When, from thy throne, thou would'st descend to me  
And be a suppliant to the thing thou spurn'st.  
What can'st thou give that would be dearer then ?

The past yet lives within my memory.

I see the Son of Night with youth's warm hopes,

Ardent, impulsive, kneeling at thy feet,

Loving the flowers that played upon thy brow,

Loving the sunlight robes about thy limbs,

And thee with love, wild, fierce, and passionate.

Did my arm once curl round thy lovely frame ?

Did my lips once taste of thy rich warm kiss ?

Aye, in a dream, for thou, thou spurn'st the form

Kneeling at thy white feet, too snow-like, pure,

Even to touch the raiment round my shape.

Once, when I came unto thy perfumed grove,

Merely to catch a glimpse of thy fair face,—

Merely to hear the rustle of thy robes,

Or see the glance from eyes of suffused light

Falling on flower that could not feel as I,—

I saw thee kneeling by the Spirit bright,

The being who to loveliness and grace

Kisses each dewy blossom thou so lov'dst.

Fondly thy white and pearl-like arms were flung

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About his neck, and thy imperial head  
Was leant against his bosom, and he pressed  
Thy form unto his heart, and then I saw  
The deep wild passion of thy soul spring up  
To life in the warm flush of crimson cheeks ;  
And at the kiss, which seemed to breathe and live  
With fervency, I leapt from out the leaves  
And struck him from thy arms, and hurled him down  
And trampled on his form, whilst thou, half mad,  
And with a fearful passion in thine eyes,  
Utter'd'st the words which changed me to this form.  
No ! could'st thou give me back again my youth,  
With all its passion, beauty, glowing hopes,  
It were in vain—my stern revenge must fall.  
Often I look upon the lovely forms,  
Thy children, glittering in their far-off home,  
And think upon their beauty, while the brood  
Of horrid shapes, whose sire thou dost behold,  
Makes every hour more bitter and accursed.  
And then I think whose passion brought me low,

Condemned me in this direful place to pass  
The many ages of my dreaded reign.  
And in my fancy I behold at times  
Thy banner woven from the golden threads  
Of joy and gladness, purity and light,  
Fluttering so bravely in thy home of love,  
While my escutcheon, carved with hideous shapes,  
Glooms in the blackness of the deep black night.  
My oath of dark revenge is sworn too deep  
Ever to be foregone—the doom is sealed.  
The water-spirits have for many a day  
Been mine, and by my will it is they rise ;  
They even now encroach upon the land,  
And e'er the setting of to-morrow's sun  
Will sweep above the island thou so lov'st."  
" Oh, mercy ! have some mercy on the place !  
I could not love thee—that no sin of mine ;  
And if thou mad'st me wrath, it was thy fault,  
Though I have often rued my hasty words.  
The beings of that realm have done no ill.

Thy power is limited, another life  
Lies beyond this, after a lapse of years  
O'er which thou hast no power, no influence.  
Spare them, at least, the bitterness of death,  
The bitterness of that long night between.  
No ! then but grant me two of that dear race,  
And two of thy dark children I will raise  
Into bright spirits as my own fair throng."  
The monster shook as though a chord was struck  
On which he was just weak. He bowed his head  
In still consent, and then shrank back to gloom  
As the fair being passed away for ever.

## IV.

Upon the summit of the lofty hill  
Stood Hiero, with his queen, in sorrow deep :  
Upon each side the beauties of the realm  
From which they were so cruelly to be torn

Lay spread around. In the far distance shone  
The proud white columns of an ancient fane,  
While the blue waves, bathing its marble plinth,  
Threatened each dash to hurl the structure low.  
And so it stood, the rude waves for its grave,  
The fading sunlight its proud robes of death,  
O'er which the night would spread a solemn pall,  
As the sweet stars came out to kiss the wreath  
Of flowers and fruits upon its pillars graven.  
With grief too deep for words they looked around,  
And Hertha murmured, with a long deep sigh,  
"O fairest land which ever sun gleamed on,  
And gilded with bright rays, must thou then perish?  
O fields of freshness, groves of scented shade—  
O silver streams, in which the snowy clouds  
Were wont to see their beauty, and the bloom  
Drop silently to sleep as the breeze passed,  
Must ye all perish—perish e'er the night  
Come round again?" He pressed her trembling  
hand,

And turning, in the woes of the vast crowd,  
Struggling to gain some lofty point, forgot  
Awhile his own. The solemn night came on.  
The many stars smiled their last smile on them,  
And, as the last moon rose, the throng still pressed  
Wildly along the mountain to its top.  
The morning broke : higher the waves had crept,  
And many a home and field and vineyard fair  
Lay now beneath the surface of the sea.  
Onwards, still onwards, as the moments pass,  
Swept the relentless waters with fierce strength.  
What sight to see the regions they so loved  
All swiftly fading 'neath the rushing waves,  
And to know too their own fate neared each dash !  
Still nearer roll the waves at every sweep,  
Encroaching on some loved and beauteous spot ;  
Onward, still onward, rolling with fierce speed,  
Burying all nature 'neath one mighty robe  
Until the foot of the lone hill was reached,  
Which, when the water struck, a mightier strength



Seemed to impel the billows. Now wild shrieks  
From that vast throng arose, but soon were hushed,  
And a white crest of foam dashed Hertha's face.  
They prayed, those two, as waiting for their death,  
But the blue waters rose no more that night.  
Long streaks of purple cloud hovered about  
The ocean's face, and robes of richest gold  
The sun drew o'er him when he sank to rest,  
While here and there floated red island-clouds.  
Soon the rich purple deepened into slate,  
The bright gold into amber, and the flakes  
Passed noiselessly away ; the shadowy dusk  
Shrouded the world, and softly sprung the stars  
Into their azure setting overhead.  
Then Hiero broke the long and painful stillness :  
" Oh, darling, see, the waters now are calm,  
As though to rest after their mighty toil.  
We have but this last night e'er death appears —  
And yet it is not bitter thus to die.  
We have been true to one another here,

And the long life which, as a dream dissolves,  
Seems covered over with a veil of gauze,  
Sweet as the halo round yon lovely moon.  
But fairer still floats softly through my mind  
The picture of the life beyond these waves.  
I see it not as yesterday—my eyes  
Seem opened, and I bow in peace to death.  
No dearer boon the spirits could have given  
Than that we should have died in this wild clasp.  
Thy love has been the spirit of my life ;  
Through many a year inspired me with the good,  
The high, the noble things I may have done ;  
The silver thread running through every deed,  
And stringing all the jewels of life together.  
A pure refiner, a bright star that through  
Many a shadowy hour has guided me.”  
“ Oh, darling, it is sweet to hear such words ;  
Sweet to be told in such rich thrilling praise  
How much thou lov’st me. Let us hope as well  
We shall be so throughout eternity.”

As the words died, from out her palace fair  
The Queen of Light, like a fair maiden, came,  
And on the verge of the vast waters stood,  
Shedding a path of bright and silvery light  
Over each ripple to the mountain top.  
Hiero and Hertha gazed upon her form  
Half-wildered, when they saw her beckon them.  
Instinctively they rose, and on the waves  
Securely walked towards her. When they came  
Quite near, she gave them welcome warm, and then  
Slowly removed the curtain of her realm,  
And bade them enter. As they passed beneath  
Those purple folds, the sea dashed o'er the mount,  
And the low sobbing of its waves was heard  
Through the lone night; and, when the morning broke,  
The sun rose o'er a vast unbroken sea.

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**A CHRISTIAN MARTYR.**



## A CHRISTIAN MARTYR.

Upon a lonely island, left to die,  
Lay a fair maiden, with her features pale  
As the death-hue that soon would settle there.  
She was so beautiful. The marble tint  
That spread its pallid veil o'er her young cheeks,  
Made her appear as some great sculptor's work  
In which the highest ideal loveliness  
Was grandly and exquisitely devised.  
Over her face a light was wont to play,  
As passes o'er a leaf of some pale flower  
A quivering moonbeam in the eventide.  
The bark that through those silent waters came,  
Bearing her there, had gone, and far off lay

Upon the ocean, as a star might lie  
Upon the verge of the night's shadowy robe ;  
For over it the rays of yon great sun  
Were streaming, and its sails glowed with the hues  
Of that rich light. By ruthless corsairs torn  
One evening from her home near the sea coast,  
In hope of gain, she was borne out to sea ;  
And they, infatuated with their creed,  
Were wroth because she did not think as they—  
Was of another faith ; and at their jeers  
Her firm and earnest spirit did not quail—  
She would not change nor yield the truth at all,  
Even for life. " It would be sweet to die  
For Christ," she said ; " to live forswearing Him  
Worse than all woes that death could ever bring."  
So they had told her, if she would not yield,  
On some lone island, at the close of day,  
She should be left to die—alone, and bound  
To the hard rocks that could not hear her sigh.  
And so it was. The sunlight had gone down,

And only the deep heaven with its stars  
Rose silently above her trembling form.  
Softly she stirred, and looked up at those stars,  
And murmured to them in a low sad tone :  
“ Ye speak sweet solace to the broken heart,  
And whisper, ‘ Come to us,’ with music rich.  
It were a dream too beautiful for earth  
That I should be the sister of yon spirits ;  
That I should live to meet those darling ones  
So dear to me in this sad life—meet them  
In the celestial robes yon beings wear.  
How vividly I see the plaintive face,  
With its soft golden curls, gazing on me,  
Of my loved sister, as she used to lie,  
Breathing as gently as a sigh of grief  
Upon my bosom, with her dewy eyes  
Full of warm love, and her fair rosy lips  
Pressing my own with tender eagerness.  
And now the grey head of my father comes,  
And my dear mother’s sorrow-troubled face.



Oh ! did you know in how sublime a cause  
Your child had died, you would not look so sad.  
Mother, I would have lain down on the sand,  
And let the wild sea wash away my form,  
For that pure faith, far dearer than my life.  
I see our home beside the rippling stream  
Murmuring among the flowers—those flowers that  
seemed

To make the air, with their soft frankincense,  
So pure, that one might almost wish to float  
Upon their holy fragrance from the earth  
Into the light that fills the world above.  
I hear the fountains that had music soft  
In their low falling on the summer eve.  
And far away the snow-tipped mountains rise  
With glorious majesty, and in the night  
Have a weird mystic grandeur, when the waves  
Of moonlight-gold with glistening ripples veil  
Their noble shapes. Why do these visions rise ?  
Shall I not know ere long a home where they

Will all appear with that immortal light  
Which His eternal love throws over them ?  
Mother, dear sister, we shall meet with God.  
My heart is failing, though I'm not alone.  
I seem to feel the light of His dear love  
Stealing about me and inspiring hope,  
And in my soul a joy I cannot tell.  
And yet I would those sweet ones I so love  
Were with me now to take my hand and press  
Its feverish warmth ; for but the early light  
Which streams each morning o'er the lovely earth  
Will now caress my chilly brow, and wreath  
A glorious halo round its pale white hue.  
There will be none to kiss my cold dry lips,  
To fold upon my bosom these thin hands,  
Or lay me in the earth—much less to place  
Wreaths of bright flowers upon my lonely tomb.  
Rather, in some lone glade beneath the leaves  
Of honeysuckle or clematis sweet,  
Or eglantine—rather a gentle bank

With sweet fresh violets growing o'er its slopes,  
And softening death with their exquisite scent ;  
With cowslips full of many an elfin sprite,  
Who in the moonlight play about their leaves.  
Would that some lilies white were near my couch,  
And a small sprig of yellow jessamine,  
Lightly above my forehead to drop down  
Its cooling dew. Sweeter, perhaps, than here,  
It would have been to die in such a place ;  
But all will soon be o'er. I see a cross—  
Oh, yes ! I see it high above me now—  
Of gold, and glowing with transcendent light.  
By it is One who, clothed in glorious robes,  
And with a crown of dazzling splendour wreathed,  
Looks sweetly down on me, and seems to smile  
With a sublime beauty. In His outstretched hand  
A halo shines, and something seems to say  
'Tis for my brow. Oh, no ! it cannot be ;  
I am too poor a thing for that to touch.  
What have I done that I should win such bliss ?

Oh, Father ! Thy immortal glory seems  
To shine through yon bright stars, that Thou hast  
sent

To bid my spirit hope and speak soft words  
Of solace to the soul bowed down by grief.  
I feel my senses fading—comes a throng—  
A throng of deathless spirits through the air,  
And on their silver wings I upward float  
Into Thy presence, Father, Saviour, God !



# **LIFE'S STREAM.**



## LIFE'S STREAM.

GENTLY are we wandering onward,  
Gently down the smiling stream ;  
Purple mists are gathering round us,  
Glowing sunsets near us gleam.

Palaces of marble whiteness  
Shine within the fairy wave ;  
Old and solemn temples glisten  
Where the waters softly lave.

Violets kiss the wooing ripple  
That their beauty flows above ;  
Roses scent the winding streamlet,  
Make it breathe of joy and love.



Lilies grow upon its bosom,  
And a wreath of beauty weave ;  
Moonbeams sleep in its embraces,  
On the cool and tender eve.

So it flows, and flows on swiftly,  
'Neath the overhanging vine,  
With the myrtle trailing wildly,  
Where its rugged banks decline ;

Flowing on by ruined castles ;  
On by grand and stately halls ;  
Flowing by moss-covered headlands,  
And 'neath ivy-mantled walls ;

Flowing with the stars reflected  
In its still and crystal wave ;  
Flowing where the blossoms falling,  
Make in it their lonely grave.

But, at times, now as we wander  
In this life devoid of rest,  
Seems to me a grander prospect  
Than these splendours at their best ;

For we float on prouder waters,  
Have a nobler realm in sight—  
Love and virtue are our castles,  
Holiness our temple white.

We float by blissful pleasures,  
Bathed in the hues of morn ;  
We float by isles of blessings  
That our summer life adorn ;

We float by joys that blossom  
Near to the gloomy wave ;  
We float by sorrows, smiling  
As the flowers upon a grave.

Affection's snowy palace  
Rears its marble portals near,  
And the gloomy halls of trouble  
Rise with their towers drear.

So floating, floating onward  
With the rosy flush of love,  
Bathing all our trembling spirits  
As the sunlight does a dove ;

Suffusing all life's promise  
With its impassioned light,  
All the sweeter and the fairer  
For its robe of spotless white.

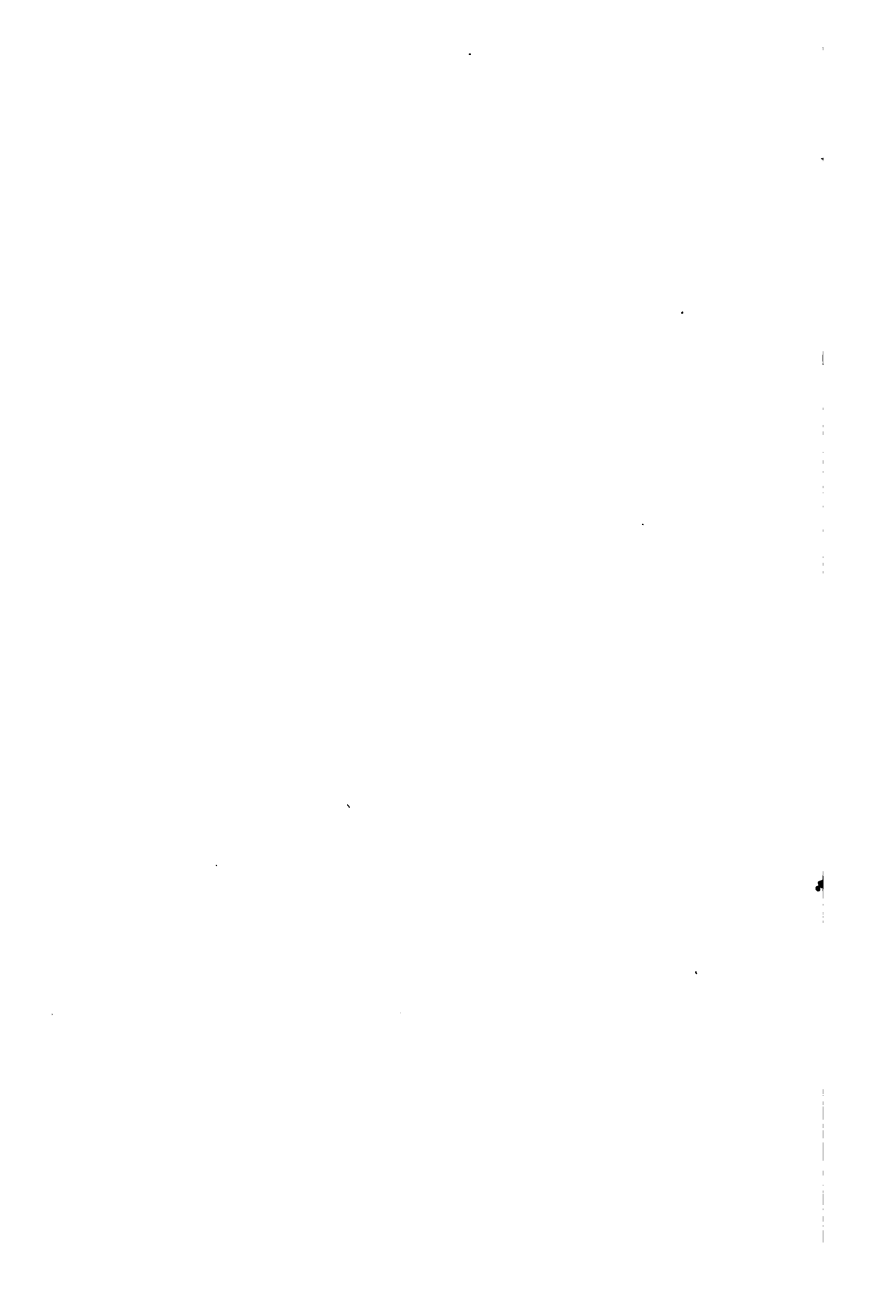
So floating, floating onward,  
Until a golden hue  
Changes the stream to splendour  
Such as mortals never view ;

For the towers of yonder city  
Rise from no earthly soil,  
And the domes that gleam so brightly  
Were not reared by mortal toil.

There are gems of richer lustre  
In the crowns of yonder throng,  
Than those which on queenly foreheads  
Minstrels have praised in song.

There are lovelier blossoms clustering  
In those wreaths of laughing flowers ;  
Lovelier smiles on those spirit-features  
Than have sprung in earthly hours.

May the stream thus bear us onward  
Thro' the joys and sorrows here,  
Thro' the winding paths of being  
To that city bright and fair.



**A FAREWELL.**



## A FAREWELL.

### I.

Do not weep at this sad parting,  
Tears, you know, are useless now ;  
They can never bind the garland  
Of a frail and broken vow.  
There are lilies slumbering near us,  
That with bosoms snowy white,  
Meet the warm impassioned kisses  
Of the morning's rosy light.  
But the darkness comes at even,  
And no solace is there left,



They of all their warm caresses  
All their loving wiles are reft.  
So with us, the light of passion  
Now burns quickly to its end ;  
Sorrow, and heart-broken feelings,  
Only with the future blend.

## II

If I have been harsh and bitter,  
Words are lighter than the air ;  
If I've done what's wild and foolish,  
Our worst deeds are written there.  
Ah ! you once seemed like an angel,—  
Like an angel pure, divine ;  
Yet you turn from me in anger,  
For a few quick words of mine.

You will find, as life is passing,  
That the highest wisdom here  
Is, as the Sabbath's evening beauty,  
Fraught with gentleness and prayer.

## III.

Like the calm and lovely stillness  
Of the summer twilight fair,  
To my vision seemed your spirit  
With its many virtues rare.  
What was bright in our communion,  
What was beautiful and sweet,  
Like a withered flower lies broken,  
Crushed beneath your angry feet.  
So one sees a bird in spring-time  
That with toil had built its nest,  
Stand beside the scattered fragments  
With a torn and aching breast.

## IV.

Why should I complain thus sadly,  
If my hopes are dashed away,  
For we build them on thin branches  
Where the winds can freely play.  
We build them in the spring-time—  
See, the summer-light shines fair  
O'er those fancies—but they vanish  
When the ripening autumn's near.  
So our love, you said one evening,  
It was as a wreath of light,  
Binding us in holy union  
With an all-enduring might.  
Is this, then, how it blossoms ?  
Ah ! the cynic may well sneer,  
At the warmth of youthful feeling,  
At the hopes our fancies rear.

## V.

But I care not much, the vision  
Was sweet while here it stayed ;  
But now 'tis gone—well, darling,  
Fate's decree must be obeyed.  
The white hand lies in my own, dear,  
But cold and heavy now,  
No crimson beauty tinges  
Those cheeks when I kiss your brow.  
There's no flower in this garden  
When you wander in summer eves,  
But will speak of joys now withered  
Like those pale and yellow leaves.  
No bird that pours its melody  
In the sunset's crimson glow,  
But will stir up former music  
With its voice so soft and low.

No star that wreathes the moonlight,  
But some tender thoughts will tell,  
And thy spirit will long for solace  
When it is too late—Farewell.









